Multi-Generational Approaches to Supporting Parents and Children

**Presentation to the Lifting Children and Families
Out of Poverty Task Force**

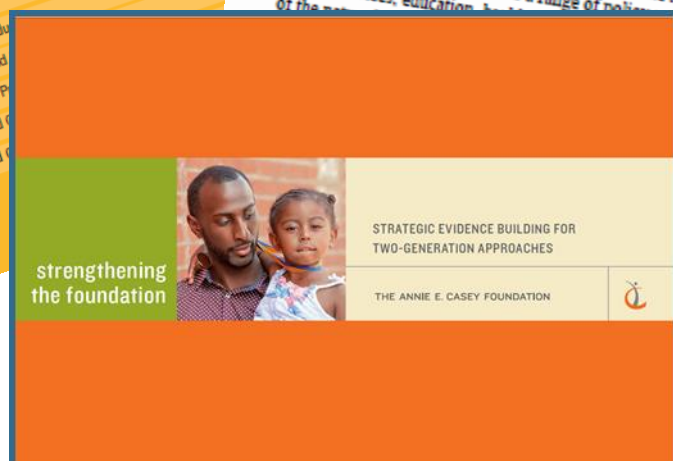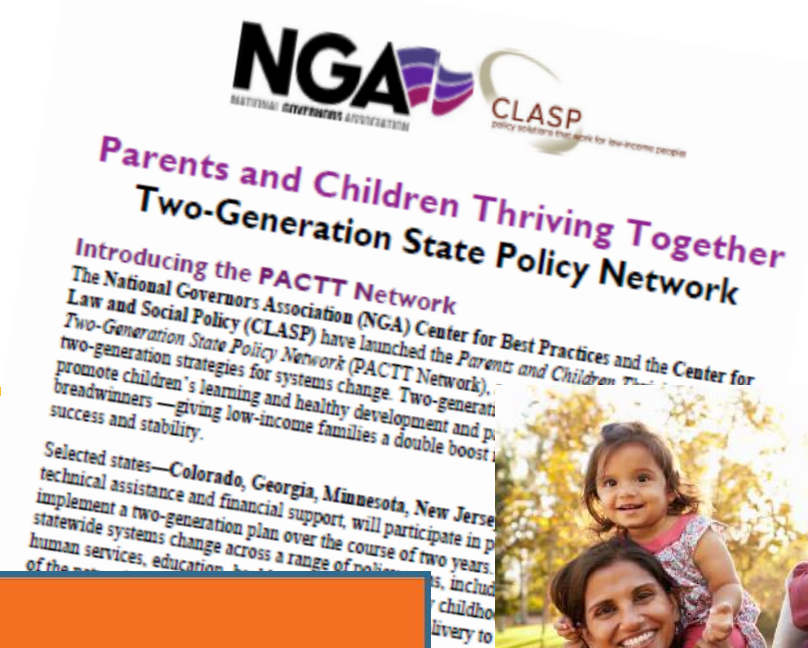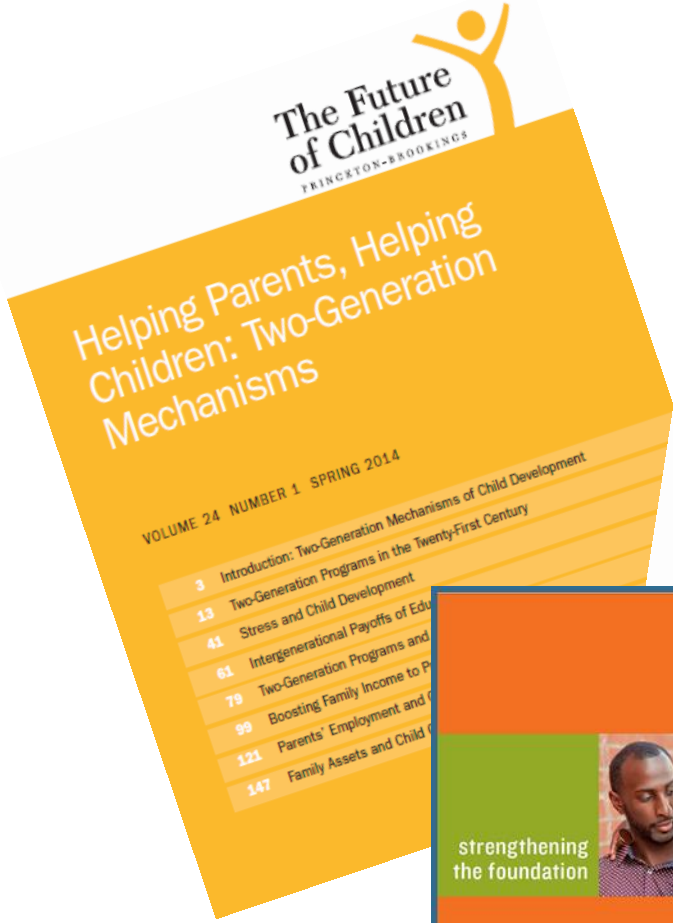**Sacramento, CA**

March 14, 2018

Christine Ross • Emily Sama-Miller

The Promise of Multi-generational Programs

- **Multi-generation programs are a promising approach to reducing intergenerational poverty**

- **Backed up by theory and research**
  - **Combined services may be a more effective intervention**
  - **Higher levels of parent education is related to stronger parenting skills, employment stability, and higher earnings**
  - **Higher parent education and family economic security is related to children's academic outcomes**
  - **Economic insecurity in childhood has lasting consequences for children**

Wide interest in intentional approaches to serving parents and their children

But Evidence on Program Effectiveness is Limited

- **Research on two-generation programs from the 1990's found few or no impacts**

- **Only two effectiveness evaluations have been conducted on contemporary programs**
  - **Evaluation of Enhanced Early Head Start found no impacts**
  - **CareerAdvance® (Community Action Program-Tulsa) evaluation found strong impacts for parents and promising initial impacts on children's attendance**

- **Lessons for contemporary programs**
  - **High-quality services**
  - **Intensive services**
  - **Intentionally serve parents and their children**

Recent research on multi-generational programs with specific focus

- **Programs that address the needs of low-income parents and children through *intentionally combined* sets of activities**

  - Child services: focus on child development and well-being for children up to age 12
  - Adult services: focus on economic security

- ***Exploration of Integrated Approaches to Supporting Child Development and Improving Family Economic Security***

  - Scan of programs operating and four site visits
  - Review research on effectiveness
  - Conceptual frameworks and research directions

REPORT

Exploration of Integrated Approaches to Supporting Child Development and Improving Family Economic Security

OPRE Report Number 2017-84
November 2017

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California Multi-Generational Programs included in the program scan

- **Family Resource Center, Los Angeles County**

- **Mothers' Club, Pasadena**

- **Pathfinder Program, San Francisco**

- **Sparkpoint Community Schools, United Way, San Francisco and Oakland**

- **Utility Pre-Craft Trainee Program, Los Angeles**

How Did the Programs Develop?

Pie chart:
- Add adult services to child-focused programs: 13
- Add child services to adult-focused programs: 7
- Designed to serve parents and children: 13
- Residential: 11
- Partnerships: 8
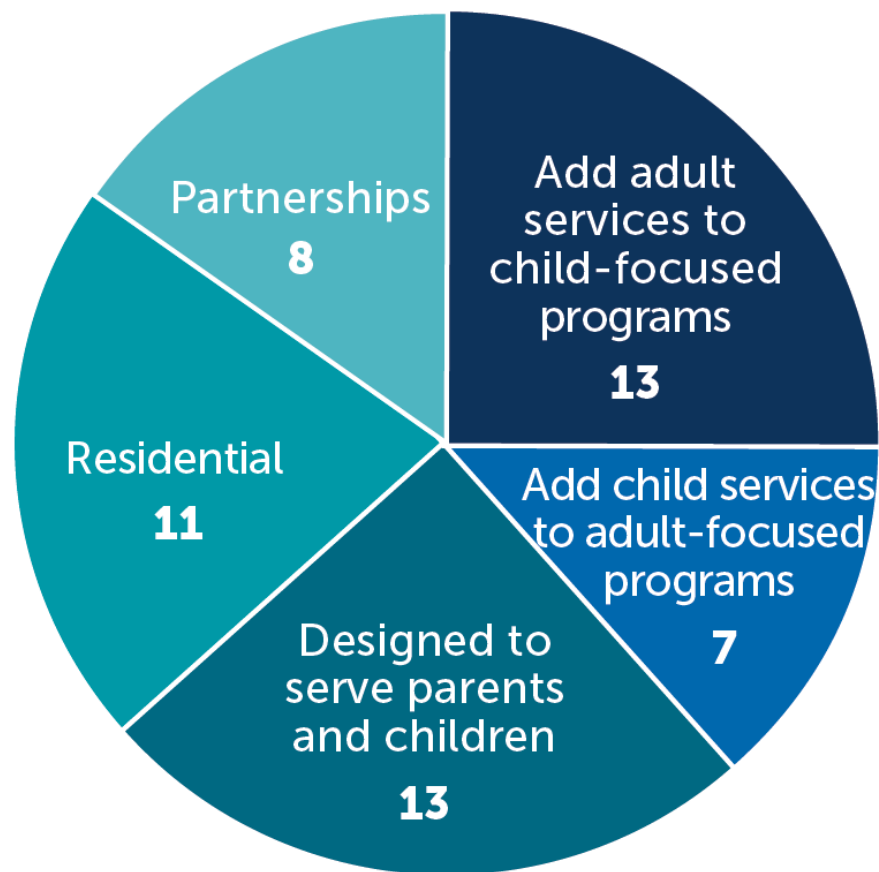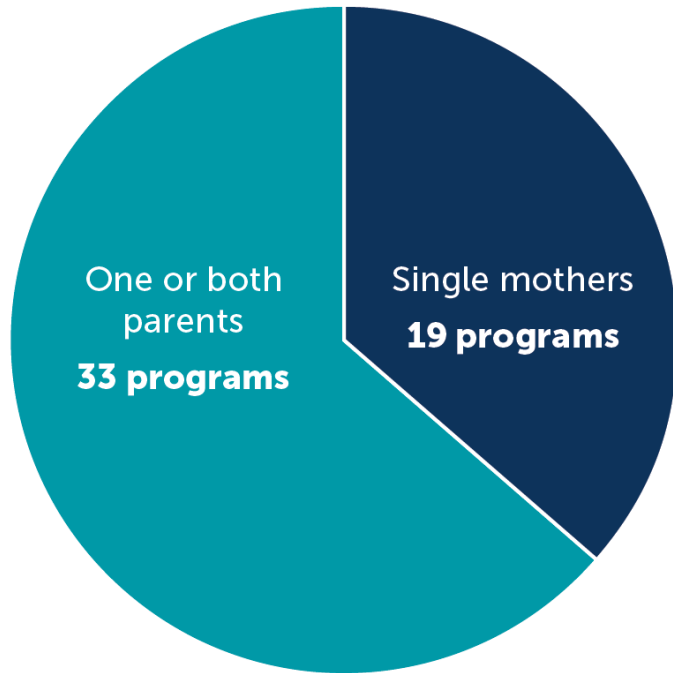
Most programs still developing

- **21 pilots or new within the past few years**

- **2 conducting outcomes evaluation**

Source: Program documents and public websites.
Note: n = 52.

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Who Is Served by These Programs?

Families in need, with adult services targeted to their circumstances

Parents

Pie chart:
- One or both parents: **33 programs**
- Single mothers: **19 programs**

Children

Bar chart:
- Prenatal: **9** programs
- Birth to age 3: **44** programs
- 4- and 5-year-olds: **38** programs
- 6- to 12-year-olds: **18** programs

Source: Program documents and public websites.
Note: No programs were designed for single fathers. n = 52.
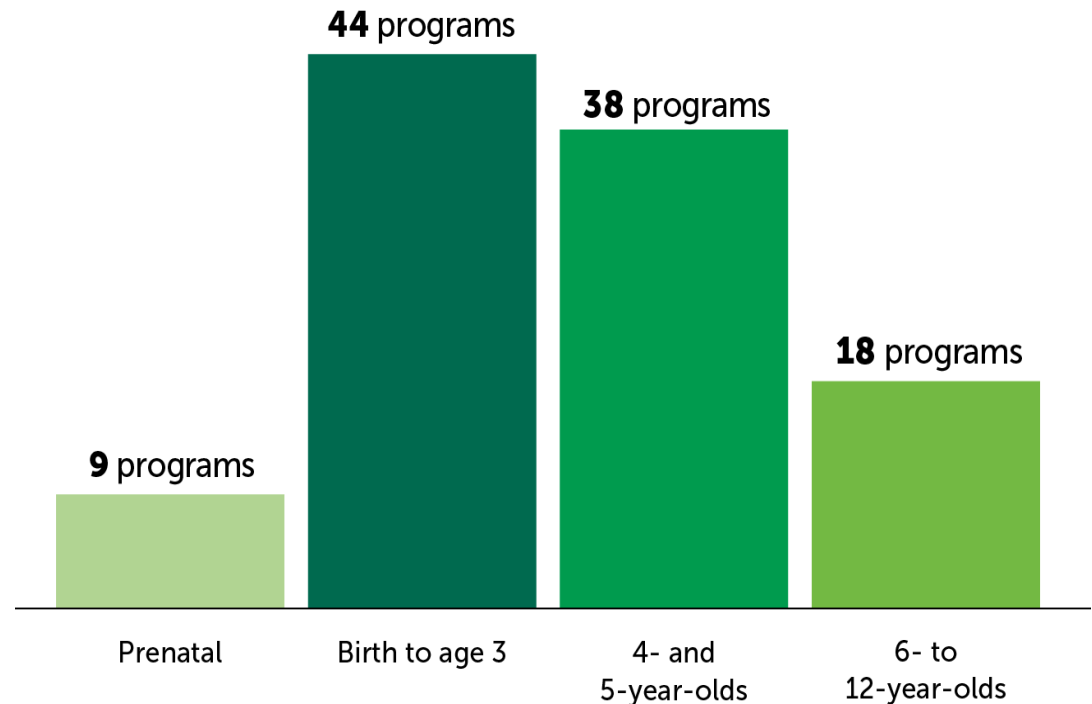
Source: Program documents and public websites.
Note: Categories sum to more than 52 programs because many served multiple age ranges. n = 52.

What Services Do Programs Provide to Adults?

Workforce development services (43 programs)

1. Job training
2. Job placement
3. Sectoral training
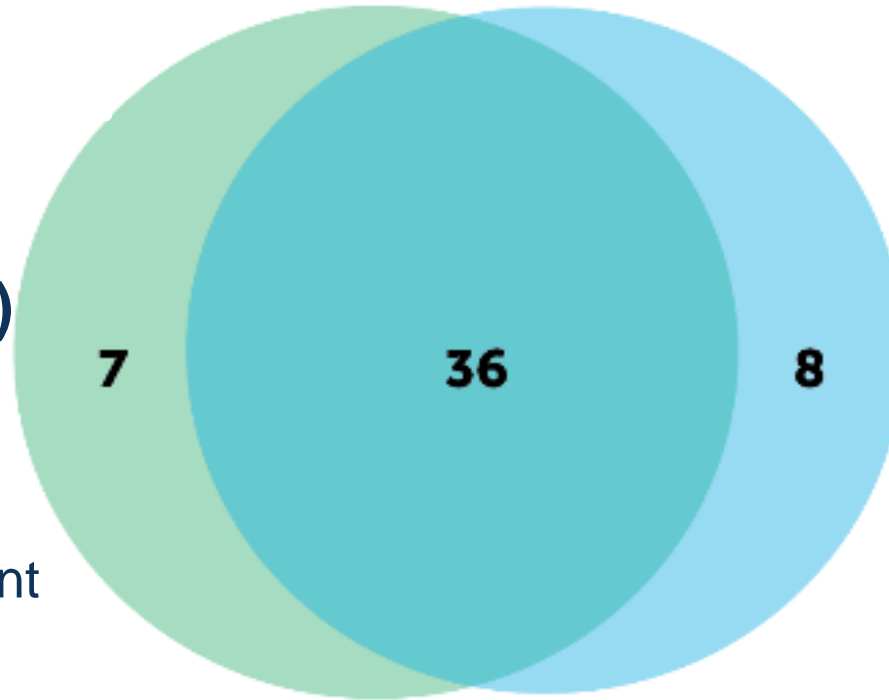
Adult education (44 programs)

1. Literacy, English, and high school equivalency
2. Postsecondary

Source: Program documents and public websites.

Note: One program, not pictured, provided intensive case management to families. n = 52.

Additional Adult and Family Services

- **Financial Literacy workshops or coaching – 26 programs**

- **Asset building – 5 programs**

- **Housing assistance – 11 programs**

- **Benefits (cash and food) access – 14 programs**

- **Health care – 14 programs**

What Services Do Programs Provide to Children?

Home-based (15 programs)

Center-based (46 programs)

1. Home-based Early Head Start
2. Other home visiting model

3   12   34

1. School readiness, pre-K, or other school-based
2. Early Head Start or Head Start

Source: Program documents and public websites.

Note: Three programs, not pictured, provided neither home- nor center-based services. n = 52.

How Do Programs Engage Both Parents and Children?

- **Co-located services**
  - Six programs offered adult services in school settings to make it easier for the parents of children enrolled in these schools to access services that promoted their own economic security

- **Simultaneous scheduling**
  - Adults in the programs that provided Child Development Associate certification student-taught in their children's classrooms
  - Some programs coordinated the schedules of adult services with those of children's center-based programs

- **Program leaders have found it challenging to design services that successfully engage whole families**

Conceptual Frameworks

Framework for Services and Outcomes

Service model

Populations served

Family

Parent or primary caregiver

Children up through 12 years old

Parent services
- Employment
- Education
- Skills development
- Family-centered services to support and promote family well-being
- Home visiting services and parenting classes

Coordinated service design
- Intentionally aligned and coordinated
- High quality and intensive
- Builds on parent-child mutual motivation

Child services
- Center-based early education
- Wraparound child care
- Out-of-school programs

Shorter-term outcomes

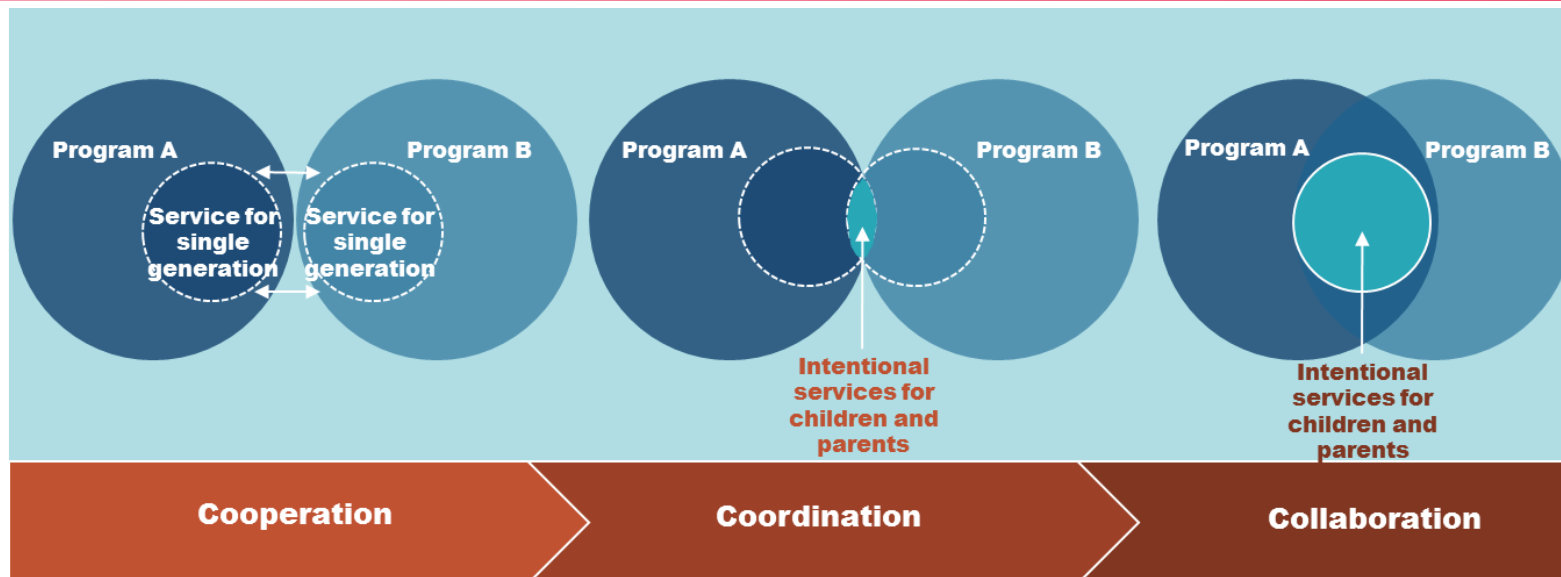**Parent outcomes**
- Stronger labor force attachment
- Increased education and career certification
- Higher earnings
- Enhanced well-being, reduced stress
- Improved parenting

Home environment
- Increased family resources
- Improved family routines
- Higher parent/child school attendance
- Greater engagement in children's learning

Child outcomes
- Improved school readiness
- Better academic achievement
- Enhanced well-being and development

Longer-term outcomes

Parent outcomes
- Stable career
- Continued certification and degree attainment
- Improved economic security and savings
- Better academic and career role modeling
- Improved parent-child relationship

Home environment
- Greater investment in children/activities
- Better functioning family system and parent-child relationships
- Improved community/social connectedness

Child outcomes
- Higher academic expectations for self
- Increased school/out-of-school engagement
- High school graduation and career/college orientation

Passage of time

0 years ➡ 5+ years

Other factors that influence services and outcomes

Adapted from Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn (2014).

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Service Partnership Framework

As approaches move along the continuum, programs shift in some key areas

Engagement: Move from cooperative cross-referrals and task-oriented engagement to significantly increased dialogue and investments of time by each program

Mission: Shift from separate missions to a shared mission that addresses the needs of the entire family and establishes program goals resulting from more frequent and deeper joint planning

Resources: No longer simply sharing individual services or money and instead rethinking how to strategically and equitably use human and financial resources to achieve maximum benefits for all

Co-creation of value: Move from operating separately and maximizing distinct assets and strengths to intentionally co-designing and co-delivering services to both parents and children

Innovation and systems change: Shift from limited joint planning to collaboratively addressing challenges, using knowledge from co-designing services to change how an entire system or approach is delivered

Note: Dimensions and phases on this continuum draw from the work of Austin and Seitanidi (2012) and Keast et al. (2007).

Directions for Research and Evaluation

Research and evaluation are in early stages but would benefit from research partnerships

- **Little research is available on currently-operating programs**

- **Few programs have either in-house data analysis capacity or external research and evaluation partners**

- **Research partnerships can catalyze program development**

Strengthening Multi-generational Program Models

- **Start with foundational work**
  - **Develop a logic model**
  - **Create and/or enhance a program administrative data systems**

- **Use data to understand services received and immediate outcomes**

- **Assess the quality and intensity of services**

- **Assess whether outcomes for parents and children trend in positive directions**

- **Learn more about partnering to offer coordinated services for parents and their children**

Key Takeaways on Multi-Generational Programs

- **Multi-generational programs are a promising approach to reducing poverty, with support from theory and research**

- **But evidence on program effectiveness is limited**

- **Multi-generational programs are complex to implement, involving intensive and high-quality services for adults and children and a lot of coordination**

- **Research-program partnerships could catalyze program development with data-informed implementation support**

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The contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the official views or policies of OPRE, ACF, or HHS.

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REPORT

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Extra Slides

Match Research Designs to Stage of Program Development

Programs developing services models

Descriptive Evaluation

Research goals:

Develop logic model

Assess service intensity and quality

Measure outcomes of services

Programs fully implemented

Effectiveness Evaluation

Research goal:

Measure program impacts

Readiness for Effectiveness Evaluation

Assess Implementation status	• Fidelity of implementation • Enrollment and participation levels
Assess the strength of program logic model	• Sufficient quality and intensity of services • Research to support expected pathways
Consider maximum possible rigor of evaluation design	• Enrollment levels support random assignment • Leadership buy-in and capacity

Effectiveness Research Options

- **Option 1: Impacts of intentionally coordinated services for parents and children**

  – A two-generation program compared with services in the community

- **Option 2: Impacts of services for the whole family compared with services for just parents or children**

  – A two-generation program compared with a child development or adult workforce development program

- **Option 3: Threshold levels of service quality and intensity**

  – Programs with differing levels of quality and intensity compared with one another